

Hi my name is \_\_\_\_\_ and this is the 8<sup>th</sup> principle minute. With the adoption of the 8<sup>th</sup> Principle, our congregation committed to dismantle racism, beginning within our walls.

We at First U are justifiably proud of the anti-racism work we have done. Moreover, we are aware that there is much more to do. Part of the most difficult work ahead of us, both as individuals and as an institution, is acknowledging failures both past and present.

We began introducing a land acknowledgement in 2014 and decades ago invited indigenous peoples in to lead a Sunday worship. However, we need to openly examine the role of our denomination in creating the modern myth of Thanksgiving, which white-washes the real events that mark the beginnings of colonization of what is now the United States by Europeans.

Most of us are aware that the myth of Thanksgiving paints a rosy picture of relationships between the Plymouth colony and the Wampanoag nation, when the real story was one of brutal conquest, massacres, and intentional germ warfare. However, as UU's we should also be aware that 19th Century Unitarians played a large role in creating this mythos. It was a Unitarian campaign that helped convince President Lincoln to declare Thanksgiving a US Holiday. We at First U were obviously not around when this happened and cannot share in the blame, but there is a difference between blame and responsibility. We have a duty to understand and acknowledge our past in order to build a firm foundation for moving forward.

As we reimagine our Society, we must consider our relationship with Native American communities, especially those of the Lenni-Lenape peoples on whose land we live.

Together we will continue this journey toward spiritual wholeness, build a beloved community, educate ourselves and discuss what it means to develop a culture of being accountably anti-racist. We will continue to look at our own practices, identity, and stories with a new lens to dismantle the racism in ourselves and our institutions.